PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS IN AUGUST 2001

ILLINOIS-INDIANA STATE LINE BOUNDARY MARKER

AVENUE "G," NEAR EAST 103RD STREET
(LOCATED ON ILLINOIS-INDIANA STATE BOUNDARY LINE)

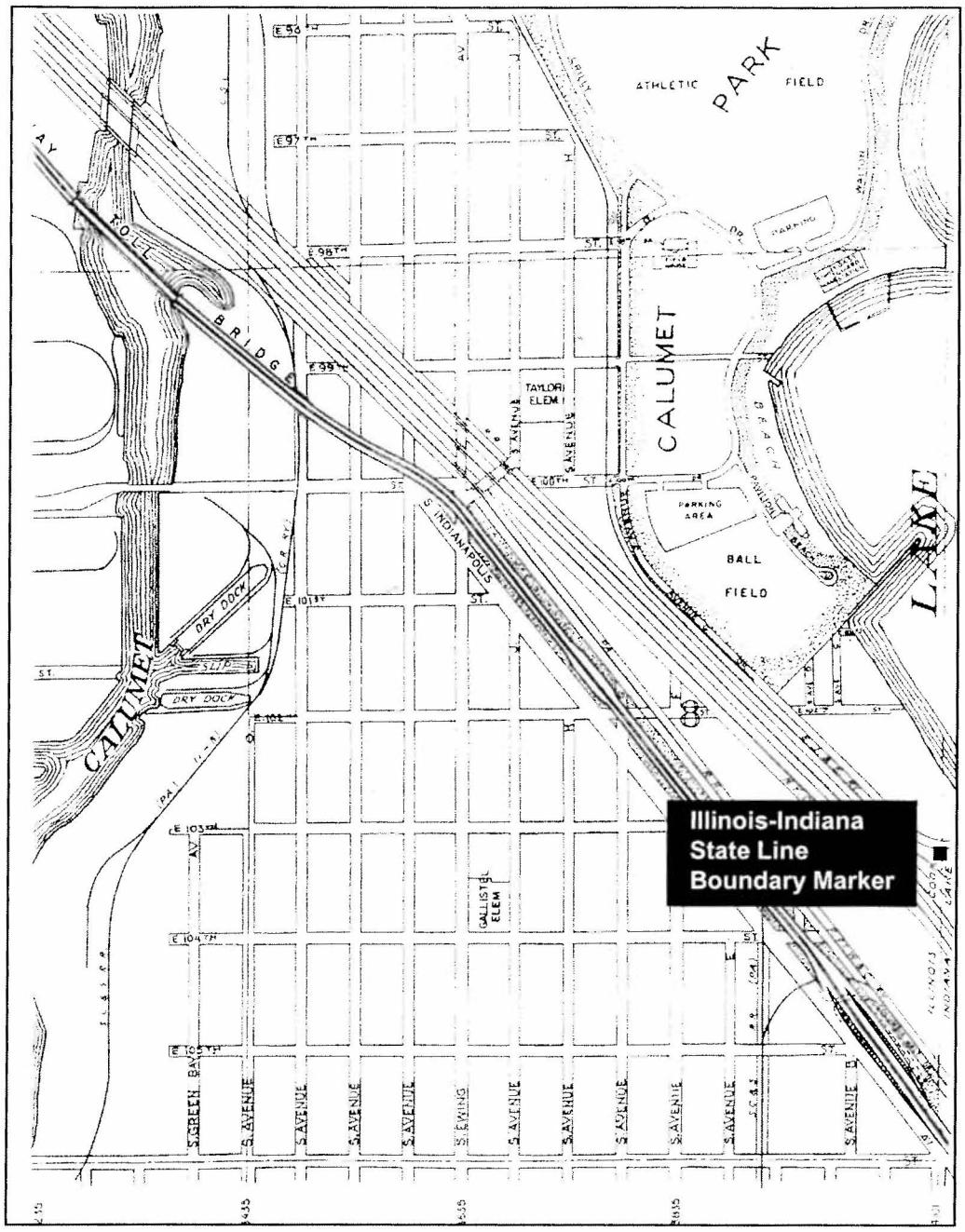
BUILT: C. 1838
BUILDER: OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES SURVEYOR-GENERAL

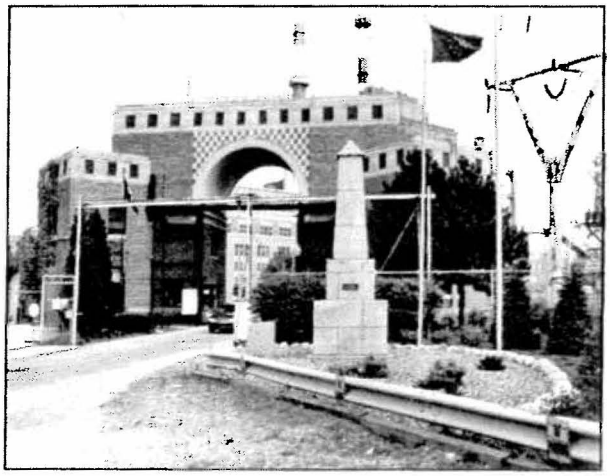
The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker has served as a visual landmark for Illinois and Indiana residents for over 160 years. The monument is one of the oldest extant structures in northern Illinois, constructed circa 1838 by the Office of the United States Surveyor-General after the completion of a re-survey of the common boundary of the two states in 1833. It represents the commitment of both the United States federal government and individual states to the systematic platting and development of the American frontier during the first century of the country's existence.

While the monument was moved slightly more than 191 feet north of its original location in 1988 to its present location near the entrance to the State Line Generating Plant, the 15½-foot obelisk remains positioned on the state line, marking the same boundary for which it was intended. It remains a significant physical reminder of early nineteenth-century efforts to survey and establish state boundaries out of the vast Northwest Territory.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

Illinois, along with its neighboring state of Indiana, was originally part of the Northwest Territory ceded to the newly-created United States of America by Great Britain at the end of the Revolutionary War in 1781. As American pioneers began to expand into the territory in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, new states were carved from the territory, including Illinois in 1818.





Above: The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker is located in the southeasternmost part of Chicago in the East Side community area.

Left: The monument was constructed circa 1838 to mark the northern end of the Illinois-Indiana state boundary at Lake Michigan. It stands in a small landscaped area next to the entrance gate to the State Line Generating Plant.

One of the earliest important functions of the federal and state governments was the establishment of clearly defined state boundary lines which were necessary for the sale of land within new states and territories. Once completed, state boundary surveys often were commemorated with markers. Extant examples elsewhere in the United States include a stone marker in Port Jervis, New York, where the New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania borders meet, and several stone markers along the boundary lines of the District of Columbia.

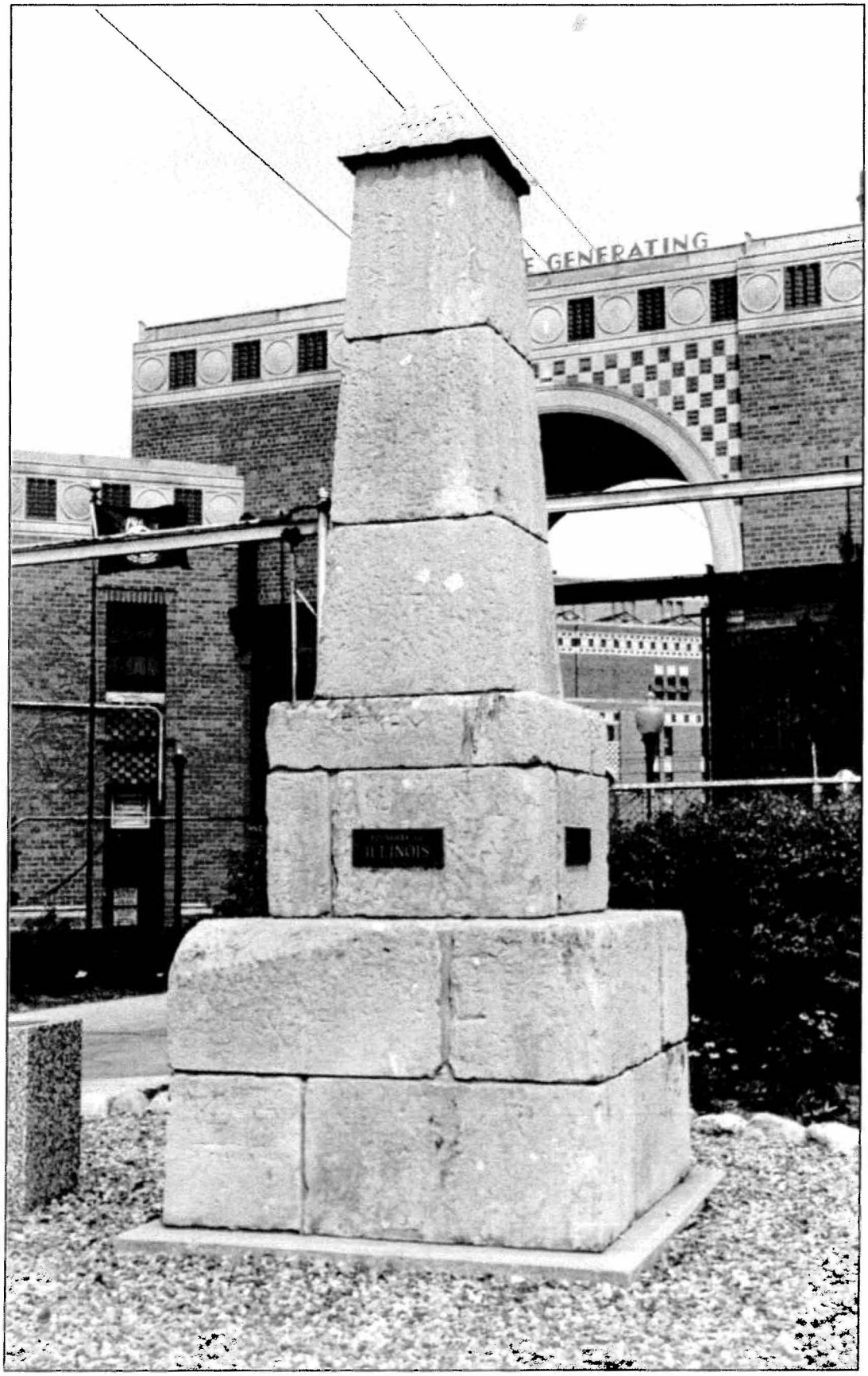
Soon after its creation in 1818, the State of Illinois appointed a commissioner to collaborate with Indiana, also a new state, in establishing the boundary line between the two jurisdictions. In accordance with the 1816 Boundaries Act of Congress, the two states hired surveyors John Tipton and John MacDonald to "adjust, run, and mark the line" from the mouth of the Wabash River, the natural barrier that formed the southern boundary line, along the river's edge "to a point opposite the town of Vincennes, and from thence by a due north line which shall touch the southern extreme of Lake Michigan." The survey was completed in late 1821, and the two states agreed to the line as proposed.

Along the Illinois-Indiana boundary, pine posts located on the banks of the Wabash River at Vincennes and by the shoreline of Lake Michigan originally marked the endpoints of this north-south line. An act of the Third General Assembly of the State of Illinois later authorized construction of a "hewn stone, of at least five feet in length and fifteen inches in diameter" to replace the pine post at the Wabash River, but no similar action appears to have been taken at that time to permanently mark the northern Lake Michigan terminus.

By 1833, however, the shifting of the Wabash River had caused the southern marker to become obscured in marshy land and a re-survey of the boundary line was ordered. At the completion of the second survey in 1834, the United States Secretary of the Treasury ordered that "the [United States] surveyor-general was instructed to have a monument erected, at the termination of the boundary line on Lake Michigan." This monument was to be "as economical as is practical." Although archival documentation of the bidding process is sketchy, it appears that by February 1838, the Office of the United States Surveyor-General had contracted to have the monument erected. A similar marker was erected at the Wabash River terminus of the state boundary line. Changing river patterns have obscured that southern marker's location, and it may no longer exist today.

Observers have noted the careful workmanship used in constructing the marker, which was obviously intended to survive through many future generations. A 1988 article in the magazine *Professional Surveyor* noted that "the craftsmen who erected the monument in the early 1800s had been more thorough in their work than casual observation revealed."

Built of sandstone, the monument consists of a two-foot-high, six-foot-square base supporting a smaller secondary level. This is topped by an eight-foot-high gently slanted tower and an angled obelisk. Iron straps within the marker hold its tapered levels together and prevent shifting of any blocks. This careful craftsmanship protected the marker despite exposure to the elements and little or no maintenance for over 160 years.



The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker is built of large sandstone blocks in the shape of an obelisk, a traditional form for commemorative monuments.

The marker was originally placed on a site immediately adjacent to the Lake Michigan shoreline. The location was an isolated one in 1838, surrounded by 15- to 20-foot-high sand dunes covered with sand reeds, dwarf willows, and small cottonwoods. The monument was almost two miles from the tiny South Chicago settlement to the northwest on the Calumet River and more than 12 miles from Chicago itself.

As development of the area around the monument occurred, however, the physical character of the marker's location changed drastically. The expansion of the city limits of Chicago to the Illinois-Indiana state line in 1889, the development of the Indiana cities of Hammond and East Chicago, and the subsequent industrial development encouraged by this growth brought changes to the formerly isolated area around the monument. Lakefill for the adjacent State Line Generating Plant in Hammond and railroad development isolated the monument from both the lakefront and neighborhoods developing to the northwest, west, and south.

By the 1980s only vandals seemed to remember its location in the Elgin, Joliet, and Eastern Railroad right-of-way. To save the historic marker from continued decay, a community group led by the late Allen J. Benson, aided by Commonwealth Edison, the owner of the State Line power plant, and advised by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, relocated the marker in 1988 from its original site, now isolated by railroad tracks, to a more accessible and secure location adjacent to the State Line power plant gatehouse. Although moved exactly 191.09 feet due north, the monument remains astride the Illinois-Indiana state boundary.

Today, the marker stands cleaned, repaired, and placed on a new solid stone foundation. The inscriptions on the marker have been updated as well and now read as follows: on the north side of the monument, "*State line retraced by act of Congress 1833*," on the west side, "*Boundary of Illinois*," on the east side, "*Boundary of Indiana*," and on the south side, "*This monument is 159.359 miles due north from the Wabash River and 191.09 feet north from its original site.*"

The historic significance of the Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker has been recognized by both Illinois and Indiana. Both the *Chicago Historic Resources Survey* and the *Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Survey* have documented the monument.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's Heritage

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social or other aspect of the history of the heritage of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker is one of the oldest extant structures in the City of Chicago, constructed circa 1838 after the completion of an important re-survey of the boundary line between Illinois and Indiana in 1833.

- The monument commemorates the platting and development of Illinois and Indiana through the surveying of the Illinois-Indiana state boundary line, a necessary and vital action that allowed the two states to subdivide land along their common border.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker is a unique monument in the State of Illinois as the only known marker remaining from the original Illinois-Indiana state line surveys of 1821 and 1833 and as one of the earliest extant structures in Chicago.

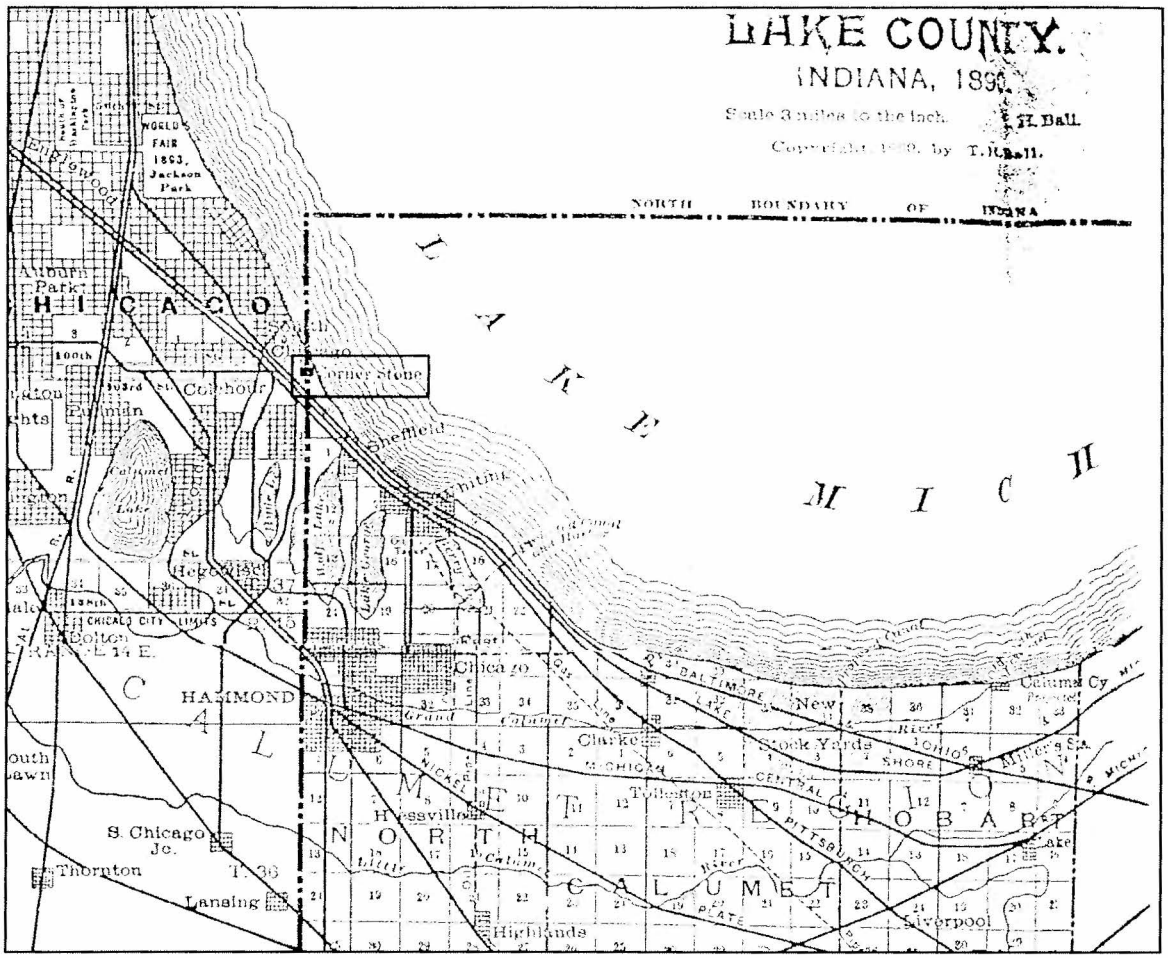
- The marker is a significant example of early nineteenth-century monument design and craftsmanship in stone. Its overall form as an obelisk—traditional for a commemorative monument—and its construction from massive sandstone blocks make it a distinctive visual presence on Chicago's far southeast side.

Integrity Criterion

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker originally was placed on a site near the Lake Michigan shoreline. Over time, the shoreline receded to the north as lakefill was created for railroad tracks and the State Line Generating Plant.

Although the monument was moved in 1988 from its original site next to the Elgin, Joliet, and Eastern Railroad tracks, it remains on the same meridian and continues to accurately reflect the state boundary line. Excluding the inscriptions—updated after the marker was moved to its present location—the monument still retains its original features. In fact, the marker was cleaned and repaired when it was moved to its present location next to the entrance to the State Line power plant.



Top: The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker was indicated by "corner stone" on an 1890 map of Lake County, Indiana. Above: Originally located on the shores of Lake Michigan, the monument had become landlocked by the State Line Generating Plant (pictured in background) and railroad tracks by the early twentieth century. It was moved almost 192 feet north of its original location in 1988 to a spot near the entrance to the State Line plant, but it remained on the state boundary line.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its preliminary evaluation of the Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- the entire portion (half) of the monument located within the City of Chicago.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker commemorates the 1833 re-survey of the Illinois-Indiana boundary, required when the shifting path of the Wabash River, which formed the southern third of the boundary line, made the original 1821 survey obsolete.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner
Brian Goeken, Deputy Commissioner for Landmarks

Project Staff
Norah Jones, research and writing
Terry Tatum, writing, editing, and layout

Special thanks to Tim Barton for his initial research and the East Side Historical Society and Jane Running of the Illinois State Library for research assistance.

Illustrations
From *Atlas of Chicago*: p. 2 (top).
Heidi Sperry, Department of Planning and Development, Landmarks Division: pp. 2 (bottom), 4, 8.
East Side Historical Society files: p. 7 (top).
From *Historic Illinois* (October 1988): p. 7 (bottom).

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, 33 N. LaSalle St., Room 1600, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-2958) TTY; (312-744-9140) fax; web site, http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.